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STATINTL

Safer If CIA Is Improved

This nation will be safer if President Kennedy's shake-up of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) improves its work of world-wide espionage. We'll be in greater danger if its efficiency is reduced.

After the failure of the Cuban invasion, for which the CIA was widely blamed, the President appointed a commission headed by retired Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, to investigate the agency's functioning.

Now, the White House announces that the CIA's Director Allen W. Dulles will retire in a few months. His replacement hasn't been decided. And apparently, there's a sifting of the agency's employees. An AP report says 26 alleged sex deviates have been fired.

If the allegations are true, how did they come to be hired? In addition to the moral question of having such employees, their guilt lays them open to being blackmailed into revealing vital secrets.

A great responsibility rests on the CIA. It is our chief means of learning what Russia is doing and can do to excel us in weapons, to undermine our military alliances, to damage us in our foreign relations, possibly to strike us with a sneak attack—things like that.

To keep our leaders thus informed, the CIA must be constantly alert in all its far-reaching activities. If needs both high intelligence and high integrity. A fumble or a betrayal of secrets could be costly to the nation—might be disastrous in a critical situation.

The CIA has earned valuable credits. It has had failures, too. But so has Russia's vast spy system. AP Writer Ben Price gave us such instances on both sides in the July 30th Democrat.

Espionage, working secretly, rarely has all the facts. Like all government, it's a standing opportunity for improvement.

Few things in President Kennedy's power could be more important to the nation than getting the CIA up to a higher point of dependable performance.